WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §5b-3-5

§5B-3-5. Joint Commission on Economic Development Studies.

(a) The Joint Commission on Economic Development shall study the following:

(1) The feasibility of establishing common regional configurations for local workforce investment areas, regional educational service agencies and for all other purposes the Commission considers feasible. The study should review the existing levels of cooperation between state and local economic developers, complete an analysis of possible regional configurations and outline examples of other successful regional systems or networks found throughout the world. If the study determines that the common regional configurations are feasible, the Commission shall recommend legislation establishing common regional designations for all feasible purposes. In making the designation of regional areas, the study shall take into consideration, but not be limited to, the following:

(A) Geographic areas served by local educational agencies and intermediate educational agencies;

(B) Geographic areas served by post-secondary educational institutions and area vocational education schools;

(C) The extent to which the local areas are consistent with labor market areas;

(D) The distance that individuals will need to travel to receive services provided in the local areas; and

(E) The resources of the local areas that are available to effectively administer the activities or programs;

(2) The effectiveness and fiscal impact of incentives for attracting and growing businesses, especially technology-intensive companies; and

(3) A comprehensive review of West Virginia's existing economic and community development resources and the recommendation of an organizational structure, including, but not limited to, the reorganization of the Department of Commerce and the Development Office that would allow the state to successfully compete in the new global economy.

(b) In order to effectuate in the most cost-effective and efficient manner the studies required in this article, it is necessary for the Joint Commission to assemble and compile a tremendous amount of information. The Development Office will assist the Joint Commission in the collection and analysis of this information. The Tourism Commission established pursuant to article two of this chapter, the Economic Development Authority established pursuant to article fifteen, chapter thirty-one of this code, the Bureau of Employment Programs established pursuant to article four, chapter twenty-one-a of this code, the

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Workers' Compensation Commission established pursuant to article one, chapter twenty-three of this code, the Workforce Investment Commission established pursuant to article two-c of this chapter, West Virginia Jobs Investment Trust, Regional Planning and Development Councils, West Virginia Rural Development Council, Office of Technology and West Virginia Clearinghouse for Workforce Education shall provide a copy of their annual reports as submitted to the Governor in accordance with the requirements set forth in section twenty, article one, chapter five of this code to the West Virginia Development Office. The Development Office shall review, analyze and summarize the data contained in the reports, including its own annual report, and annually submit its findings to the Joint Commission on or before December 31.

(c) The Legislative Auditor shall provide to the Joint Commission a copy of any and all reports on agencies listed in subsection (b) of this section, which are required under article ten, chapter four of this code.

(d) The Joint Commission shall complete the studies set forth in this section and any other studies the Joint Commission determines to undertake prior to December 1, of each year and may make recommendations, including recommended legislation for introduction during the regular session of the Legislature.

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